



9th ANNUAL OLIVER HILL SCHOLARSHIP AND ESSAY COMPETITION

The contest is open to all University of Virginia undergraduates and local high school juniors and seniors

AWARDS:

**\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP TO ONE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
UNDERGRADUATE**

**\$500 PRIZE TO ONE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITHIN
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY AND ALBERMARLE COUNTY**

DEADLINE: APRIL 15, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Please see scholarship application for further details.

Questions may be directed to SERVICE@UVABLSA.ORG

A Tribute to Oliver Hill

Civil rights pioneer Oliver White Hill Sr. was one of the most influential civil rights attorneys of the 20th Century. His strategic challenges to the “separate but equal” doctrine were instrumental in the landmark Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*. After *Brown*, state laws that intentionally segregated students were deemed unconstitutional. In addition to providing a means to establish equal educational opportunities, *Brown* overturned several infamous racially discriminatory Supreme Court decisions including *Plessy v. Ferguson*. After the *Brown* decision, Hill tirelessly continued his fight in Virginia, helping to combat “massive resistance,” an established state –supported effort to avoid desegregation. Hill’s efforts catalyzed the Virginia Supreme Court ruling invalidating Virginia’s prohibition of integrated schools.

Hill earned a number of awards and citations for his outstanding accomplishments, including the 1959 “Lawyer of the Year Award” from the National Bar Association, the “Simple Justice Award” from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in 1986, and the American Bar Association’s “Justice Thurgood Marshall Award” in 1993. In 1999 President Bill Clinton awarded Hill the “Presidential Medal of Freedom,” affirming the national importance of Hill’s contribution to the United States’ social framework. Locally, students at the University of Virginia honored Hill when they founded the Oliver W. Hill Black Pre-Law Association. After an illustrious 60-year career in civil rights, fighting for integration, equal pay for African-American teachers, access to buses, and voting rights, Oliver Hill died on August 5, 2007. Nonetheless, his legacy lives on as we strive to achieve equality in education.

As a tribute to Oliver Hill’s legacy, in 2008 the University of Virginia Black Law Students Association (BLSA) launched a scholarship essay contest. We are pleased to sponsor

the scholarship again this year. In order to participate in this contest, students must respond to two essay questions. All entrants must answer question one in 500 words or less. For the second question, undergraduates should respond in 500 words or less and high school students should respond in 300-500 words.

Question 1:

How have you benefitted from Oliver Hill's efforts to ensure diverse school environments? How have you contributed to or furthered the goals that Oliver Hill fought for?

Question 2:

Over the course of this last year, we have seen the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement. As many have tried to voice their frustrations with the inequality facing the Black community in our country, we have been reminded of the struggle for equality over the years. Civil rights leaders endured hardships and violence to advance the cause. They made choices to help create a future that had more rights and protections than they had. When considering the injustices present in society today, how do you think they can best be combatted? Would the tactics used during the civil rights era work today? What other methods would be useful?

Essay Rules

Eligibility:

The competition is bifurcated; high school students and undergraduate students will be judged separately.

The scholarship competition is open to all currently enrolled University of Virginia undergraduate students. One winner will be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship. Questions 1 and 2 should be answered in 500 words or less.

The essay contest is open to all Charlottesville and Albemarle High School juniors and seniors. Question 1 should be answered in 500 words or less. Question 2 should be answered in 300-500 words. One winner will be awarded a \$500 prize.

Judging:

Essays will be judged on both style and content. Judges will look for writing that is clear, articulate, and logically organized. Winning essays must demonstrate an outstanding grasp of the historical significance of Oliver Hill's contribution, and thoughtful consideration of the student's individual role in continued activism. Further, students are encouraged to complete additional research regarding Oliver Hill's life and other civil rights pioneers to enhance their essays.

Biographical Information:

To avoid disqualification, a cover sheet **MUST** include: your full name, address, telephone number, e-mail address (if available), the name and address of your school, grade level, and an alternative contact person (if available).

Honor Code:

The substantive conceptual and written product in the essay must solely be the work of their entrant. However, essayist may seek limited help editing and grammatically refining their work. Entrants should be especially careful not to plagiarize ideas or written work product as it will lead to automatic disqualification. Please include proper citations. Entrants must include, sign, and date the following honor pledge on the cover page of their submission:

“The substantive ideas and written work included in this essay are the sole work of the essayist.”

Submission: Essays must be typewritten, double-spaced, have one-inch margins, and be completed in 12 point Times New Roman font.

Essays must be postmarked no later than **April 15, 2016**.

Essays may be e-mailed to service@uvablsa.org or mailed to:

**ATTN: UVA BLSA Community Service Chair
Oliver Hill Scholarship Committee
580 Massie Road
Charlottesville, VA 22903**

The decisions of the judges are final. All entries become the property of the University of Virginia Black Law Students Association and will not be returned.

Winners and other participants will be notified via e-mail or by mail by April 30th. If you have any questions regarding the contest, please contact service@uvablsa.org.

Thank you and good luck!